



Texas News



Luling Zedler's Mill Paddle Trail

Photo courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Recent Success

Zedler's Mill Paddling Trail Opened – A First for Texas!

A pilot project of the RTCA-supported Luling Zedler's Mill Project came to fruition recently as officials from the City of Luling, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority, Texas State University, Zedler's Mill Steering Committee and Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) cut the ribbon to open TPWD's first inland water trail. The six-mile route on the San Marcos River between U.S. Hwy 90 and the historic Zedler's Mill in Luling offers canoeists and kayakers a safe, well-mapped route with convenient access and parking. To increase recreation opportunities, support tourism, and conserve the natural and cultural resources of their town, Luling residents, city government, business interests, and conservation and recreation groups came together to restore and redevelop the historic Zedler's Mill (built in 1874) and surrounding property on the banks of the San Marcos. RTCA provided group facilitation, planning and design, and fundraising support to this effort, which includes recreation features, cultural venues, historic preservation, resource conservation, and economic development as critical elements of a multi-phase project.

RTCA PROGRAM

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. RTCA staff provides technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects they initiate. By investing in the protection of special places, recreation, tourism, and well planned development, local leaders can bring long-lasting economic and quality of life benefits to their communities.

Groundwork and Youth Corps Make a Difference in Dallas

On National Trails Day, Groundwork Dallas and a traveling Americorps team celebrated the results of a successful partnership at the Buckeye Trailhead. Groundwork Dallas hosted a 9-person youth corps from the National Civilian Conservation Corps for a two-month stint in Dallas. While the team was stationed in Dallas, the Americorps group helped Groundwork Dallas complete work on three miles of new and existing trails and several trailheads in the Great Trinity Forest. The Forest is one of the largest urban bottomland forests, but it lacks public amenities for visitors. The Americorps team, along with volunteers recruited by Groundwork Dallas, landscaped the trailhead at the Buckeye Trail by installing decorative fencing, native plant landscaping, and shade trees. The Rivers, Trails and Conservation

Assistance Program has been assisting Groundwork Dallas as it launched a new organization aimed at shepherding community-led greenspace improvement projects in Dallas' Southern Sector. RTCA helped the local Groundwork steering committee obtain funding from the Groundwork USA Pilot Program of the National Park Service and the Brownfield Program of the Environmental Protection Agency.



Groundwork volunteers enjoy their hard work.

Current Projects

1. Lake Houston Regional Park

Project Goal: Having recently taken over an ailing State Park, the City of Houston wishes to offer new and improved park facilities at the 5,000 acre Lake Houston Regional Park. Through partnership involvement, park managers expect to expand the trail system for hiking, biking, and horseriding with linkages to other parks, greenways, and urbanizing neighborhoods and to add new opportunities for paddling and wildlife viewing.

RTCA Role: RTCA will develop and implement a stakeholder process to determine community desires for park and trail system and participate in master plan development. Staff will also help develop a funding strategy and build partnerships for phased implementation.

NPS Contact: Kathryn Nichols

Partner: City of Houston



Photo by Mike Lutomski, GHORBA

Young riders hope for more trails to ride at Lake Houston Park.

2. Gonzales Independence Trails

Project Goal: The City of Gonzales, Gonzales County Historic Commission, Gonzales Chamber of Commerce, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department have partnered together to advance the Gonzales Independence Trails project. The Gonzales Independence Trails project endeavors to establish a network of recreational resources including a paddling trail along the Guadalupe River, land trails in and around the City of Gonzales, and various resources which tell the rich history of the Texas



Revolution in the Gonzales region.

RTCA Role: RTCA is facilitating this partnership and helping the people of the community express their desires about recreation, river conservation, and the future of their community through a citizen-led steering committee and series of public meetings.

NPS Contact: Steve Bonner

Partner: Gonzales County Historic Commission

3. Rio Grande Good Neighbor Initiative

Project Goal: Support and expand recent progress on implementation of Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River management plan, and efforts to designate and manage the Rio Grande as a nationally significant resource in Mexico. US and Mexico land managers will work together to develop recommendations for structuring a cross-border consultation process, and identify specific cooperative river restoration and conservation projects that can address priority management issues for the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River.

RTCA Role: RTCA will facilitate workshops that bring together a binational river management task force to develop a collaborative action plan.

NPS Contact: Alan Riggins

Partner: Rio Grande Institute

4. Tioga Trails and Recreation Planning

Project Goal: Tioga, Texas is a community of just 875 people located on Lake Ray Roberts north of Ft. Worth. Though the community is small, it sits on the edge of explosive growth in the Dallas-Ft. Worth Metroplex. RTCA is helping the people of Tioga prepare a Parks & Recreation Master Plan as one part of an overall community visioning project. This effort will help Tioga prepare for the growth that is headed their way, and will also establish a recreational trail along the banks of the lake on Corps of Engineers property as a pilot project of the plan.

RTCA Role: RTCA will facilitate community input to identify users and uses of potential land and water trails and support the development of a master plan for trails and recreation.

NPS Contact: Steve Bonner

Partner: Tioga Economic Development Corporation

NPS-RTCA Contact Information

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Current Projects



Visitors flock to Rio Vista Falls on the San Marcos River.

5. San Marcos River Corridor

Project Goal: The San Marcos River offers the community and its visitors a quality recreation experience in an ecologically significant and sensitive resource. But managing recreational use and resource protection is not without its challenges. The project partnership, which includes both public and private sector organizations, seeks to improve management of recreation impacts and protection of riparian greenspace adjacent to 1.5 miles of urban river and 1 mile of spring-fed lake shoreline. The partnership has also planned the acquisition of 250 acres of open space in the headwaters region and the addition of up to three miles of new trails connecting to existing trails.

RTCA Role: RTCA has been asked to: assist partners in developing a planning process, facilitate the public involvement portion of master plan development, identify study needs, and assist in conducting studies to support the plan, especially regarding recreation impacts. RTCA will help develop implementation strategies for improved resource management and sustainable recreation uses.

*NPS Contacts: Kathryn Nichols and
Marta Newkirk*

*Partners: City of San Marcos and
Texas State University*

6. Dallas Green Team

Project Goal: Dallas faces a complexity of issues from resource protection to the economic stability of its varied neighborhoods. Groundwork Dallas has identified two compatible needs: improving the Great Trinity Forest and providing skill training and employment for youth in economically challenged adjacent neighborhoods. A newly created Green Team of neighborhood youth will develop and maintain up to six miles of trail in the Great Trinity Forest and its gateway neighborhoods and conduct clean-ups and restoration projects along as much as 18 miles of Trinity River and

A newly created Green Team of neighborhood youth will develop and maintain up to six miles of trail in the Great Trinity Forest...

White Rock Creek. While giving of their time and talents in community service, Green Team members will themselves benefit from a tailored curriculum of life skills training and encouragement in setting personal life and career goals.

RTCA Role: RTCA will convene and facilitate a committee of community members and Groundwork Dallas board members to develop a Green Team Program concept to include such components as training, work and stewardship experiences, recruitment and retention, compensation, logistics, and target audience. RTCA and the committee will (1) create a curriculum, (2) identify trainers and partnering organizations for both curriculum and projects, (3) develop an implementation plan with proposed timelines, and (4) identify funding sources and advise on funding proposals.

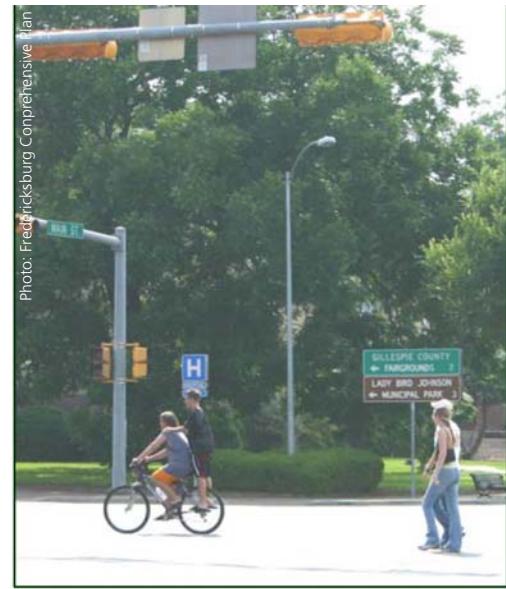
*NPS Contact: Kathryn Nichols
Partner: Groundwork Dallas*

7. Fredericksburg LBJ-Nimitz Trail Corridor

Project Goal: The Texas Hill country is a tremendously popular destination for cyclists. Local partners, including the City of Fredericksburg, National Museum of the Pacific War, and the Lyndon Baines Johnson National and State Parks, envision an 18-mile bikeway linking the region's scenic and historic sites of interest. This initial bikeway is expected to spur interest in a larger city or region-wide network, possibly including new trails and bike routes within the LBJ National Historical Park's boundaries.

RTCA Role: RTCA will help assess corridor resources for potential on-road bikeways and/or off-road trails; help develop conceptual plans; assist with partnership building for plan development, adoption and implementation; and help identify and secure funding.

*NPS Contact: Kathryn Nichols
Partner: Fredericksburg Convention
and Visitors Bureau*



Bikeways would serve residents and visitors alike.